1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

unmarried women who are of marriageable age) and widows occupy a hut of their own similarly to the bachelors[1]. In the camps that I visited I did not find any such spinsters' hut. What unmarried females there were, I found attached to one or other of the families of the village, each one living in the hut of some married relative, generally the parent or foster-parent.

All the huts face inwards towards an open space which is the dancing ground of the village, and, except in exposed situations, are generally entirely open in front. At some convenient spot on one side of the dancing ground is to be found the communal cooking place of the village. This is generally close to the bachelors' hut, as it is the bachelors who attend to such cooking as is carried on there. Besides the public cooking place each family has its own fireplace in its own hut, on which a fire is kept continually alight. In the village two or more families may build their huts adjoining one another in such a way that they become for all practical purposes one hut, of which each family retains its own special portion. Two brothers will thus often make a sort of common household.

The communal hut, in the way in which it is arranged, and even in the way in which it is built, is really a village with all the huts drawn together so that each one is joined to the one next to it and the roofs meet in the middle. In the centre of the hut there is an open space corresponding to the dancing ground of the village. It is even used as a dancing ground, though for this purpose it is somewhat small. It is the public part of the hut. Around this are arranged the different families, each occupying its own special portion of the hut, which is marked off by means of short lengths of wood laid on the floor. The public cooking place is sometimes inside the hut, and there is the space marked off for the unmarried men. The advantage of the communal hut is that it affords a better protection from the weather; its disadvantage is that it leaves almost no room for dancing.

Thus it may be seen that the arrangement of the camp shows

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 108.

Mr Subramanian of the Forest Department and Mr Majid's young son also accompanied us. We reached Bumila Creek on the north eastern coast of the Little Andaman at about 3 P.M. and having sighted an Andamanese hut we decided to anchor the launch there. The beach was about 2 miles from the place of anchorage. We took out a small boat and rowed to the beach and reached the hut at about 4 P.M. It was found to be abandoned but there were signs of human occupation and within a few yards a water-hole was discovered. A broken canoe, with a single out-rigger was found close to the hut (*see* Plate I, Fig. 1). Burnt coal and smouldering ashes in the centre of the hut showed that it was probably deserted by the Aborigines as soon as they had sighted us. After making a careful inspection of the place we returned to our launch and decided to anchor there for the night. Unfortunately the choppy sea and the strong current coming from the Bumila Creek tossed our small boat throughout the whole night, as a result of which all of us had an uncomfortable time.

We left southwards towards Hut Bay early in the morning and as we moved along the coast we sighted another Onge hut. This did not seem to be deserted as we saw a few people moving about. We decided to stop there and investigate. We took out a boat and moved towards the coast with such presents as we had brought from Port Blair on the advice of the Chief Commissioner. When we got near the coast, we left the boat and walked for about a furlong through coral beds finally reaching the shore. The hut was found to be circular in shape and not too large, and was occupied by 2 adult females, 1 adult male and a young boy. The adult male, *Ukla*, was the father of the young boy and husband of the younger woman. The older woman was his mother-in-law. These people appeared very friendly. We gave them presents we had brought and took photographs and made drawings of their hut. In addition, full anthropometric measurements were taken by me and blood was taken from fingers for typing by Mr Sarkar. Ukla was able to speak a few Hindi words and we gathered that he had been to Port Blair and knew Mr Bonington, formerly of the Forest Department, Andaman Islands. We found in front of the hut, hanging from a large tree the skull and mandible of a Dugong (*see* Plate I, Figs. 3 & 4). We enquired about its significance from Ukla, but unfortunately his knowledge of Hindi was not sufficient to explain it to us. We learned from him, however, that the name of the village was *Laito*. After making friendly gestures, we returned to 'Molly' and proceeded immediately towards Hut Bay. At about noon time while we were having our lunch, we suddenly saw three outrigger canoes (of single outrigger type) coming towards us, each carrying about 4 Onges. We signalled to them and they came to our launch and tied their canoes with it and came on board. The men appeared to be friendly and not afraid of us. Our greatest difficulty, however, was language, as we could not make ourselves understood as none of the crew or any other member including Mr Subramaniam of the Forest Department knew that language. There was one man who seemed to occupy a position of authority among these men, and was painted with red and yellow ochre on the forehead, arms and breast. The

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Negritos

Sri Gupta, in conclusion, has been tempted to emphasise with firm conviction that the Andamanese are, therefore, very probably a remnant of the dwellers on the marshes of Bengal and the uplands of Santhal Paragana or the dense forests of Burma and Malaya. 174

As regards the native appellations and phonetic similarity, such apparent similarity is possibly evidenced in many groups separated from each other by long distances. Similarly, the diet of raw meat and fish is and was common to all hunting and collecting tribes of the world. Independent evolution of many tribes has been akin to each other and therefore, the further geological studies and studies in anthropology can only confirm the idea.

Since the arrival of the Andamanese in the islands, a gradual separation has taken place among the different branches of population who had moved to different parts of the islands. The micro-environment has exerted considerable influence in moulding these people ultimately giving birth to a number of sub-groups. However, the broad generalisations are their hunting and collecting economy, complete ignorance about the domestication of the plants and the animals, except the Onges who have learnt only for the last 30 years the domestication of dogs. Family is the smallest social unit and a few families constitute the communal hut. Each tribal sub-group has its hunting territory, within which it maintains a more or less nomadic life till they return to the main settlement where they have a communal hut. 105 174 [592] [423]

The doctrine of the environmental determinism exemplifies itself in the adaptation of the aborigines to the local environment. In their life, they never look beyond their local geography and the materials for houses, the food, the ornaments and every thing that they are in need of, are collected from the small territory in which a community lives. So the obvious conclusion may be drawn that the coastal tribes are dependent on fishing, turtle hunting and gathering of shells and oysters and the interior tribes on hunting. This type of primitive economy, based on hunting and collecting, cannot support more than two to four persons per square mile as against more than 300 per square mile in agricultural lands and again the density varies to a great extent according to the type of agriculture practised e.g., rice-growing regions support the maximum density of population. In spite of their all-round self-sufficiency they have some connections with the later settlers. For the want of iron, tobacco, distilled liquor, opium etc., these aborigines (jarawas) either make periodic raids on the settlements (Onges and Andamanese) or have established friendly relations with the settlers. The necessity 105 105 177 439

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

rather than order is given by the leader. Cipriani observes.[1] "For instance, it is very amusing for them to think that a man gives orders to others. This means that they have no real chiefs. A so-called Onge chief, or raja, is only the head of a group of families living in the same communal hut, and giving not orders but only advice. It is the most experienced man who is considered chief in the hut, but his authority if at all never goes beyond that hut. In other words no real chief exists in the Little Andaman. Notwithstanding this, there is a perfect order in the island, because nobody interferes with the work or encroches upon what can be considered the rights of others."

As is common to most of the aborigines, the Onges are generally not very receptive when the questions about their numbers and other groups are enquired. The headman says that there are many many fifty Onges. However the number of the Onges are approximately 600.

As regards the mode of living of the Onges, the hunting and collecting are the basis of their economy. The domestication of the plants i.e. art of agriculture is not known to them and it is only 30 years back, the dogs arrived in the island and have been domesticated by the Onges for chasing the pigs, their main prey. In the absence of agriculture, the natural products of the sea and the forest provide them with all their items of diet. Animal and vegetable products and honey are the main items of their diet and there has been, so far, no introduction of salt in their diet. The most important victims of their hunting are pigs and turtles, the former is chased by dogs and are killed with great cruelty. The cooking of the fish, meat, roots, tubers, jackfruits etc are done by putting them under fire. Preservation of foodstuffs is not widely practised except the jackfruit seeds which are tied up in a small net inside water on the bank of some stream and taken out during rainy season, when the other vegetable foodstuffs are not available. On the whole, the Onges have a very balanced diet with a fair richness of all the nutrients. In this connection the observations of Dr. Cipriani during his survey in the Little Andaman throws considerable light in their conditions of life. He has estimated the Onges as one of the happiest people of the world, who in spite of their primitive economy, are not the miserable victims of poor health, ill nutrition and oddities of life.

Some amount of artistry and craftsmanship have developed among these people. A canoe can be constructed by a man, all by himself from

1 Cipriani, L—Survey of Little Andaman during 1954; Bul. Dept. Anth.,